

A Kirtland's Warbler in Paulding County by Micki Dunakin

Please let me provide a short narrative of the discovery of a Kirtland's Warbler in my backyard, or how I found a Kirtland's Warbler while drinking a cup of coffee and looking through the grocery ad....

Thursday, September 21, dawned drearily. There had been drizzle overnight and the sky was heavy with dark gray clouds. The weather forecast only promised more of the same. It was so frustrating! Plans had been made to meet my friend, Rita Shinnars, at the Black Swamp Nature Center in Paulding. I called Rita and we decided to postpone our morning of birding. I still wanted to search for birds, so I donned my raincoat and walked back to our woods. An hour and a half later I returned, contented to have found a small flock of warblers. It was time to plan the weekend grocery shopping, so I fixed a cup of coffee and settled on the sofa in our sun room. As I scanned the sale prices, a movement in the pine outside our window caught my eye. It was a warbler, so I picked up the binoculars. The first view was of the back. It appeared "different", and when the bird turned I was stunned. I have spent a number of years observing warblers, but never in my wildest imaginings did I believe that a Kirtland's Warbler would ever be in my backyard, in our sprawling Scotch Pine. But there it was, foraging alone among the branches!

Following the initial shock, I realized that the colored bands on both legs were important, so I hastily scribbled down their sequence. I observed the bird for several more minutes until it disappeared into the foliage, then I went to the phone. No one could be reached but Rita. She left her tomato canning immediately and headed over. I just hoped that the Kirtland's would remain for the 20 minutes it would take for Rita to arrive. Luckily it did and we both watched it for over a half hour. Suddenly, a Cooper's Hawk flew by the tree and landed on a nearby snag. The Kirtland's bolted from the pine. We searched for it without results. Jim Haw and Marisa Windell from the Fort Wayne (IN) Stockbridge Audubon Society came in the early afternoon, but our efforts were fruitless. I still look at the pine with a sense of incredulity, and without a doubt I will continue to regard it with awe for some time to come.

I later reported the colored band arrangement to the U.S. District Ranger office in Mio, MI. I also contacted Paul Sykes of the National Biological Survey. They have been conducting a Kirtland's Warbler research project since 1984. Mr. Sykes told me that the colored bands identified the Kirtland's as the one banded on June 5, 1995 six miles south of Luzerne, in Oscoda Co., MI. He added that it was "banded as an adult male singing on territory". The band number is #202063954. I had initially believed that the bird was a female. Although I had seen several male Kirtland's in breeding plumage, I had never seen one in autumn. Obviously, what I presumed to be a female was in fact a male in fall plumage!

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Birding in E by Greg

The observations that form the basis of this report were made from February, 1990 to July, 1994 by the Brooks Bird Club [of Wheeling, WV] Louise Casto and Carl and Juanita S.

Egypt Valley is part of a large reclamation project in Belmont Co., eastern Ohio. It is named after the Egyptian Valley, but is famous for having been a surface mine shovel. The part covered by the report is south of Morristown, Ohio and north of Interstate 100. It can be accessed by exiting Interstate 100 eastbound. Westbound on Interstate 100, exit 100 and continuing west three miles to the end of the road.

Mining ended in the early 1970's and afterwards. Ownership of the area was transferred to the Conservation Fund of America, a Department of Natural Resources. The area was purchased for 14,300 acres. The area was planned to develop hunting, trapping and fishing. The area is apparently, on the east by County F and on the west by the area covered by this report is in Belmont Co.

Reclamation consisted of back filling the pits, spreading out the overburden, and reforesting the area. This has resulted in nearly smooth slopes characteristic of reclaimed mine land. Treeless slopes have been seeded with grass. Because of the abundance of silt and clay, the ponds are partly filled. These shallow ponds have extensive vegetation. The most common plant is (Typha spp.). Not only are the ponds filled with vegetation, but the ponds downstream two miles from the ponds are nearly a continuous cattail-filled marsh.

In eastern Ohio, wetlands and treeless areas are common. Therefore, some bird species did not frequent the area, at least in the last 20 years.

Most of the interesting birds that are found here are shorebirds, hawks, rails, owls, wrens, and almost nonexistent because very little mining and farming that occurred here. The wooded swamp area at and near the end of the map). Prothonotary Warbler is also found here.

Hérons and Shorebirds

Of course, Great Blue Herons and other large wading birds can be near any body of water. Egypt Valley is notable for the large number of herons observed each spring. One of the most common herons observed is the Great Egret.